

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

'Grandma' Wong a blessing to students

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Many Mississippi Baptists are not aware that Baptist Student Unions (BSU) are funded by both local Baptist associations and churches as well as the Mississippi Cooperative Program (CP). Some people, however, like to supplement CP gifts in unique ways.

Frances Wong (also known as "Grandma Wong") of Cleveland is the product of CP and other mission giving. As a way of continuing "on mission," over the years Wong has collected and sold discarded aluminum cans, raising more than \$10,000 for the Delta State University's BSU in Cleveland to go toward their summer student missions goal.

"I walk twice a day," said Wong, "and I've picked up the cans along the road, wherever I go. I've been doing that for 14 years."

At the BSU, Wong also helps by serving meals. "I do everything but prepare the entrée — I make salad, serve, wash the dishes, clean... anything to keep up God's house."

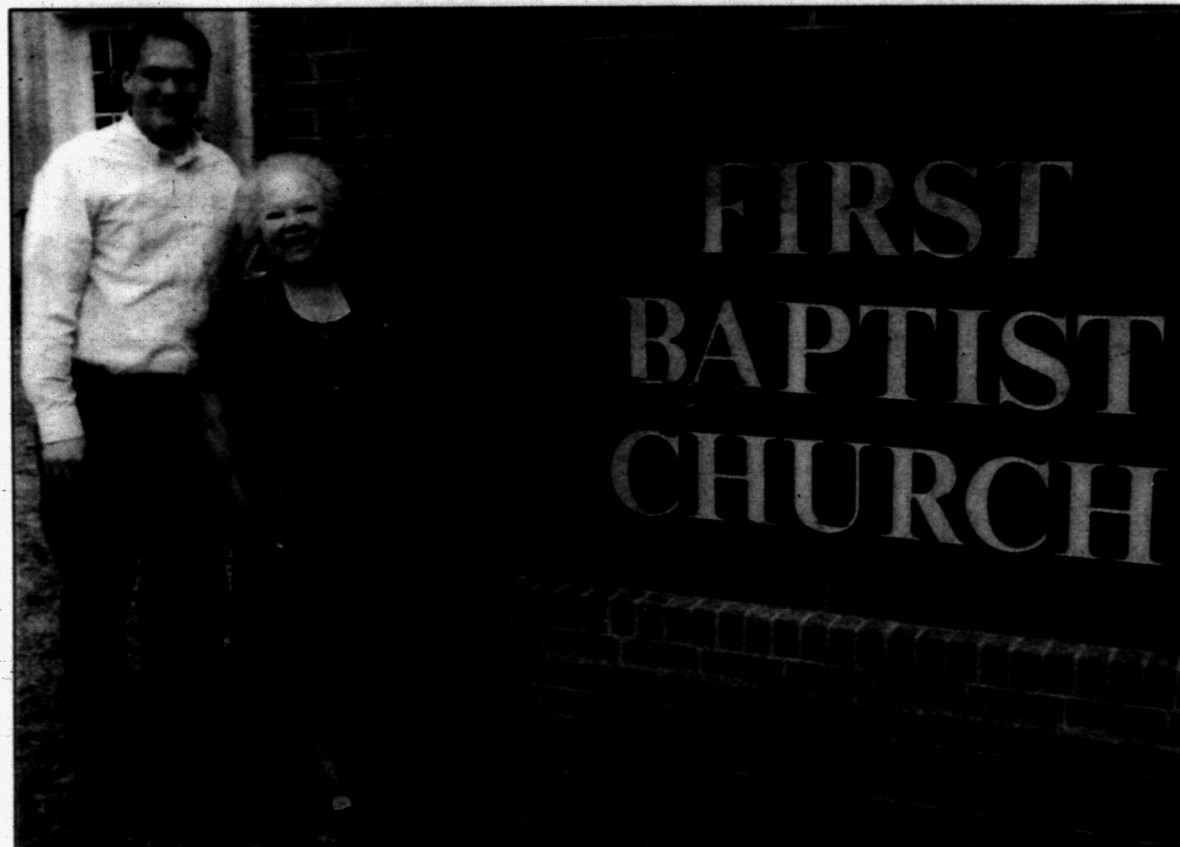
Wong was born in 1925 in Louise. Her father owned a grocery store in Louise. When she was six, her father decided that she, two siblings, and her mother needed to return to Canton, China, to know more about their culture. In 1931, the Wongs returned to her ancestral home.

In 1937, Wong was led to Christ by a Southern Baptist missionary. "I was attending the Baptist private girls' school, and a missionary came and led in a revival. I gave my heart to Jesus. I was baptized in Canton."

Wong has visited China five or six times since then, once with her pastor at First Church, Cleveland in the 80's. "I was glad to see God was still at work in Canton," said Wong. "You know how you go to stores and see things marked 'Made in China'? Well, this one soul was 'saved in China!'"

"The Lord blessed me on my trips back to China," she said. "I always try to plant the seed [of the Gospel] when I've visited. I'll buy a little toy for the children, and when we go to different places, I'll try to see a grandmother with children, in a park or somewhere. When I give the toy away, I tell them about the love of Jesus. The seed might not grow right then, but it will grow later. Sometimes I will pass out tracts. I went into a coffee shop in Hong Kong to get some coffee, and there were some missionaries from Australia there. They were afraid to pass out the tracts they had bought because they were foreigners, so I took their tracts and hid them in a Chinese newspaper. When I went onto the mainland, I passed them out to my cousins, to schoolteachers. I have no fear, because if you go in the name of God, He will take care of you. The glory and the power and the honor belong to God — I have no part of it."

When Wong returned to Mississippi from China after her salvation experience, she settled in Louise and worked in her father's store. In 1945, she married Glenn



'GRANDMA' AND PASTOR — Bradley Rushing (left), pastor of First Church, Cleveland, and Frances "Grandma" Wong are part of the giving spirit present at the church. The church gives 14% of its budget to the Cooperative Program; Wong has raised over \$10,000 by picking up and selling cans to give to student summer missions at Delta State University's Baptist Student Union. (Photo by Tony Martin)

in a wedding arranged by her family. The couple lived in Los Angeles until 1959. While living in California, they had five children. "I married into a non-Christian home," she said. "My husband loved to drink. When his father died, he had to take care of the family, so I had to live with the in-laws. We had so many trials and tribulations, so much anguish... it almost pushed me into committing suicide but God sent His angel. My mother-in-law rented a house to a woman who was a strong Christian. So one night, I decided I couldn't take it any more, and I took four of my children over to her house, and told her to keep the children, that I was going to commit suicide by lying down on the railroad tracks. She begged and prayed on her knees for me not to do it. Because of her prayers and cries, I decided not to do it. I went back and accepted those trials and tribulations and continued to take care of my children. I really came to love the Lord because of the cries of that lady. I took my four children, caught the Greyhound, and ran away. My brother took me in but it frightened my husband so bad that he looked for me and brought me back home. He changed his ways after that."

Glenn became a Christian, she said. According to her pastor, Bradley Rushing, "Mrs. Frances has a keen sense of knowing blessings from the Lord, whether they come in trials, tribulations, or in times of good. You'll hear her say, 'I never complain, but I grumble now and then.' Truth is, she never grumbles."

"Every day is a blessing," said Wong. The Wongs eventually retired and moved into their retirement home in Boyle. Glenn died seven years after their move.

"God has blessed me to see four generations of my family. I have three great-grandchildren," Wong said. "It's amazing what God can do. I just can't understand why people can't believe in Him. He has done so much for us."

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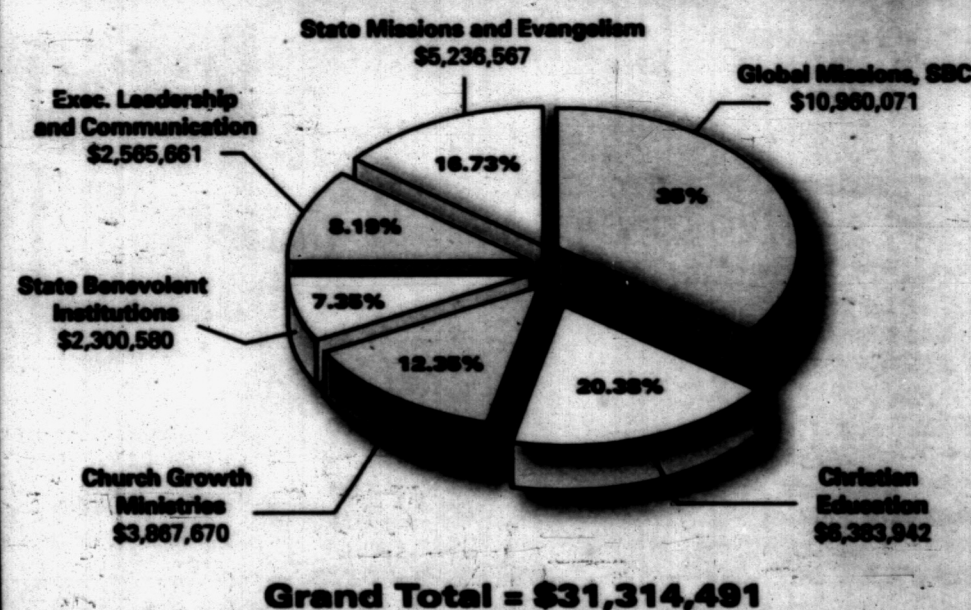
VOL. 130

No. 16



SPECIAL
COOPERATIVE PROGRAM
EDITION INSIDE

2006 Cooperative Program Mission Budget



2005 COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORIES BASED ON CHURCH OFFERING AS REPORTED ON THE 2004-2005 ANNUAL CHURCH PROFILE COOPERATIVE

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$25,000 and below

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
ALCORN/JACINTO	\$3,149
CLARKE/PLEASANT GROVE	\$2,147
ATTALA/PILGRIMS REST	\$1,693
MID-DELTA/BLAINE	\$1,440
NORTH CENTRAL/TEMPLE	\$1,399
CHOCTAW/CROSS ROADS	\$1,394
MARSHALL/CAYCE	\$1,319
JASPER/CALVARY	\$1,314
LEE/PALMETTO	\$1,207
NEWTON/GOOD HOPE	\$1,179

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$25,000 - \$39,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
KEMPER/LIBERTY	\$7,700.00
MISSISSIPPI/BERWICK	\$6,829.00
WINSTON/NEWTON	\$5,788.04
CARROLL/SILOH	\$5,164.00
NEWTON/ROCK BRANCH	\$4,620.00
X-TENDED MISSION/BENEZER SENATOBIA	\$4,152.46
BENTON/TIPPAH/FAITH-TIPPAH	\$3,908.46
MONROE/PLUNGE	\$3,770.70
BENTON/TIPPAH/SHADY GROVE	\$3,539.46
PONTOTOC/IMMANUEL	\$3,323.04

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$40,000 - \$54,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
KEMPER/CENTER RIDGE	\$8,000.00
LAUDERDALE/LIBERTY	\$7,346.19
CALHOUN/OLDTOWN	\$7,300.89
MID-DELTA/ELGIN	\$7,008.93
WAYNE/ZION	\$6,961.51
MISSISSIPPI/CROSBY	\$6,492.00
SHARKE/DESA/DEER CREEK	\$6,395.07
YAZOO/NEWTON	\$6,372.16
UNION/CORNNERSVILLE	\$5,916.00
CARROLL/MCCARLEY	\$5,521.00

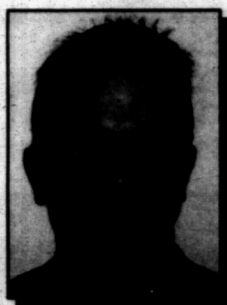
CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$55,000 - \$74,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
RANKIN/AT PISGAH	\$11,776.71
MAHON/CALVARY	\$11,641.93
JACKSON/REOLE AVE	\$11,003.58
YAZOO/OK GROVE	\$9,383.63
CALHOUN/SABOUGLA	\$9,199.69
UNION/CORNYLLE	\$8,259.08
RANKIN/ROCKY RIDGE	\$7,732.86
WEBSTER/COLLINS GROVE	\$7,610.45
MAHON/IMMANUEL	\$7,493.00
MARSHALL/CALVARY	\$7,201.00

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$75,000 - \$99,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
GULF/CORNFORT/UNION	\$18,448.98
CALHOUN/CREEK	\$18,404.79
PRESTON/COTTO	\$13,982.71
CALHOUN/PLEASANT HILL	\$11,988.38
CLARK/BLAINE	\$11,944.78
SHARKE/DESA/VALLEY PARK	\$11,493.95
SHARKE/BLAINE	\$11,493.95
ATTALA/COOL	\$11,261.24
LAFAYETTE/COLLEGE HILL HEIGHTS	\$11,218.24
RANKIN/ROCK HILL	\$10,994.79

JON DANIELS



Daniels

The Cooperative Program just blows people's minds. I have friends who are members of a church in another denomination who are absolutely astounded at the work that Southern Baptists are able to do around the world because of the Cooperative Program. Although I have been a member of a Southern Baptist church since I was nine years old, I have to admit that I am still astounded by it, too.

I am astounded that by giving to the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists are able to impact Muslim-dominated regions in our world with the life-changing Good News of Jesus Christ. I am astounded that through the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists seminaries are able to provide affordable theological education and training that is second to none. I am astounded that by supporting the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists are able to plant churches around our nation that are effectively reaching people in this post-modern world.

Everywhere we Southern Baptists look, we can see the impact that the Cooperative Program is having for the cause of Christ. It is still one of the most effective tools that we have in advancing the Kingdom of God in our world. Keep supporting it and rejoice in the participation that your church has in God's work around our nation and world.

SHAWN PARKER



Parker

I once had a minister of another denomination ask how many missionaries our church supported. I was amused at the look on his face when I said, "We only have about 10,000 scattered throughout the world. Oh, and by the way," I said to my friend, "we also own six of the finest seminaries in the world and train thousands of young people for vocational ministry every year." I could have gone on, of course, but I felt like I was bragging by this point.

Of course I went on to explain how we are part of such a grand ministry through the cooperative efforts of Southern Baptists. No church I've served could ever have had such a long arm of ministry by itself. However, when our arm is connected with the thousands of other Southern Baptist church arms, we're able to reach literally around the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This one fact is chief among the reasons that I support the Cooperative Program.

I hope you'll celebrate the wonderful opportunity the Cooperative Program gives us all to be part of God's grand plan of redemption!

STAN BUCKLEY



Buckley

Why does the Cooperative Program matter? Why is it still relevant after all these years? One of the best reasons is because none of our churches, regardless of size, can accomplish what all of us can accomplish when we combine our resources and when we work together. Alone, none of our churches could support three Baptist colleges in Mississippi. Alone, none of us could support six seminaries around the country. Alone, none of us could support over 5,000 full-time international missionaries. And alone, none of us could provide relief to all those who have been helped on the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina.

But together, we can provide a quality Christian education. Together, we can train the next generation of ministers. Together, we can send missionaries all over the world. And together, we can help the hurting along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

As God's Word instructs us in Ecclesiastes, "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." When we were saved, God placed us in the Body of Christ. He did not call us to go it alone; but instead, to love, cooperate with, and work alongside other believers. The Cooperative Program enables us to do, and to be, far more than we could do or be otherwise. May God bless our churches as we cooperate with one another for His Kingdom's sake.

AM CENTURY CLUB GIVING

BRADLEY RUSHING

"Most things are made in China, but I was saved in China." That quote came from one of our most devoted members, Mrs. Frances "Grandma" Wong. While born in Mississippi in 1925, her parents sent her back to China to attend a Baptist girls school located in Canton, China in 1937. While she was there, she attended a revival held at a church in the area led by a foreign missionary from America. As a twelve-year-old girl, she gave her heart to the Lord Jesus Christ following the presentation of the gospel. I have heard her say many times, "Lottie Moon led me to Jesus." Although Lottie Moon passed away many years before Frances went to China, she acknowledges her salvation as a result of the mission work of Lottie Moon. Today, "Grandma" Wong is an ardent supporter of the

Cooperative Program and missions. She is just one example of the many lives brought to Jesus as a result of missionaries sent out with the help of the Cooperative Program. Not only does the Cooperative Program benefit out-reach, it also benefits in-reach. I have personally experienced its benefits. For the past several years, I have attended the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, graduating with several degrees and receiving a quality seminary education. This accomplishment would have been significantly more difficult had the seminary not had support from the Cooperative Program. I'm proud of the impact that God is making in His Kingdom with Cooperative Program giving.

Rushing

JEFF HOLLAND

In Ephesians 4:16, a short but powerful phrase grabs my attention — "as each part does its work." When we work together, we accomplish far more than either of us could ever hope to accomplish on our own. Our music minister and I enjoy turkey hunting together. Our tasks are simple: he works; I play. He does the calling (a combination of five or six different calls); I do the shooting. He helps me accomplish what I can not accomplish on my own. That's what giving to the Cooperative Program means to me: every Southern Baptist and every Southern Baptist church working together to share Jesus with the world.

Holland

LUKE LANE

The importance of the Cooperative Program is difficult to place into words. I have participated in the Cooperative Program all of my life as I have attended Southern Baptist churches. I fully understand the importance of cooperating with other churches to proclaim the gospel around the world.

When I attended seminary, the Cooperative Program helped me financially. It was then I realized the Program also assists seminaries and all of their programs. In addition, I was introduced to the program that helps send our missionaries throughout the world.

I am a proponent of building teams to accomplish great tasks. I can think of no greater calling than proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ around the world. I know that God is allowing me to proclaim the gospel in Newton as well as around the globe through the Cooperative Program. I am cooperating with many different churches to accomplish ministries that I would never be able to accomplish by myself or the church I pastor.

If you are not presently participating in the Cooperative Program, I strongly encourage you to research the benefits of the program. It will be well worth your time. Your church and your ministry will prosper as you encourage the church to have a global vision through the Cooperative Program.

Lane

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$100,000 - \$149,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
LEAKE/FBC CARTHAGE	\$45,238.04
LAWRENCE/SHILOH	\$33,582.00
MID-DELTA/SENE	\$32,219.17
RANKIN/CATO	\$31,521.91
LINCOLN/MT MORIAH	\$21,505.51
ADAMS/CLIFF TEMPLE	\$19,119.02
YALOBUSHA/BETHEL	\$18,488.82
YAZOO/CONCORD	\$17,248.00
X-TENDED MISSION/ARKABUTLA	\$17,178.79
WALTHALL/EDGE	\$17,049.31

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$150,000 - \$249,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
CARROLL/CARROLLTON	\$67,673.17
SMITH/SYLARENA	\$48,678.17
COV-JEFF DAVIS/WHITESAND	\$48,632.00
PONTOTOC/ECRU	\$45,331.25
PIKE/TERRY'S CREEK	\$44,046.53
LINCOLN/NEW PROSPECT	\$43,160.89
RANKIN/CROSS ROADS	\$40,119.10
SCOTT/SPRINGFIELD	\$38,313.76
LINCOLN/FRIENDSHIP	\$30,085.00
LAUDERDALE/HEBRON	\$29,614.22

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$250,000 - \$499,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
PERRY/FBC RICHTON	\$76,489.89
PIKE/CENTRAL	\$71,788.79
GOLDEN TRIANGLE/PLEASANT HILL	\$70,844.89
RANKIN/PELAHATCHIE	\$69,828.29
LEBANON/MACEDONIA	\$69,676.59
CALHOUN/FBC CALHOUN CITY	\$61,945.89
NEWTON/HICKORY	\$60,311.29
COV-JEFF DAVIS/FBC COLLINS	\$55,189.22
JACKSON/WIDE	\$55,789.35
COV-JEFF DAVIS/PRENTISS	\$52,979.54

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$500,000 - \$999,999

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
MONTGOMERY/FBC WINONA	\$179,589.13
CHICKASAW/FBC HOUSTON	\$169,515.35
LANAR/FBC FURNS	\$134,835.25
LAUDERDALE/FBC COLLINSVILLE	\$122,991.85
UNION CO/FBC NEW ALBANY	\$116,839.85
MID-DELTA/FBC CLEVELAND	\$116,889.84
MONROE/FBC AMORY	\$115,885.82
NEWTON/FBC NEWTON	\$108,717.83
LEE/FBC BALDWIN	\$107,817.85
COPAH/FBC CRYSTAL SPRINGS	\$105,894.71

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$1,000,000 and above

ASSOCIATION/CHURCH	CP GIFTS
METRO/FBC JACKSON	\$778,447.16
LEE/CALHAW	\$699,899.14
METRO/BROADMOOR	\$575,781.89
METRO/COLONIAL HEIGHTS	\$525,917.84
LEE/HARRISBURG	\$504,889.75
METRO/MORRISON HEIGHTS	\$503,891.32
METRO/FBC CLINTON	\$391,289.39
GOLDEN TRIANGLE/FAIRVIEW	\$389,829.87
GOLDEN TRIANGLE/FBC COLUMBUS	\$382,818.89
RANKIN/FBC BRANDON	\$249,139.25

2006 MISSIONS SPP BAPTIST
COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET
MISSIONS ALLOCATIONS

Global Missions/SBC

17.50%	International Mission Board	\$5,480,036
7.98%	North American Mission Board	\$2,498,896
7.57%	Six Seminaries	\$2,370,507
1.16%	SBC Operations	\$363,248
0.79%	Other Agencies	\$247,364
35.00%	SUBTOTAL	\$10,960,071

Christian Education

8.49%	Mississippi College	\$2,657,595
7.40%	William Carey College	\$2,317,135
3.12%	Blue Mountain College	\$975,495
1.21%	Board of Ministerial Education	\$380,444
0.16%	Education Commission	\$53,273
20.38%	SUBTOTAL	\$6,383,942

State Missions and Evangelism

5.48%	Collegiate Ministry	\$1,717,076
2.81%	Woman's Missionary Union	\$879,642
1.57%	Church Planting	\$490,460
1.57%	Mission Strategy	\$490,315
1.82%	Men's Ministry	\$570,632
1.58%	Missions Mobilization	\$494,712
1.06%	Evangelism Promotion	\$331,726
0.84%	Stewardship	\$262,004
18.73%	SUBTOTAL	\$6,236,567

Church Growth Ministries

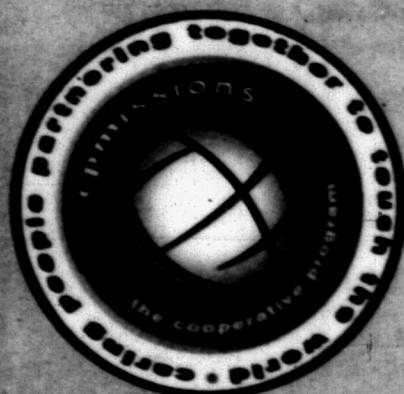
2.23%	Discipleship/Family Ministry	\$698,201
1.75%	Capital Needs	\$548,679
1.90%	Sunday School	\$595,229
0.80%	Conferencing	\$250,000
1.58%	Church Growth	\$494,322
1.48%	Church Music	\$464,732
1.12%	Pastor/Leadership Development	\$351,037
0.89%	Church Minister Relations	\$277,260
0.80%	Church/Community Impact	\$188,210
12.55%	SUBTOTAL	\$3,867,670

Executive Leadership & Communication

2.39%	Financial Resource Services	\$746,892
1.82%	The Baptist Record	\$569,086
1.41%	Communication Services	\$442,959
1.40%	Executive Leadership Team	\$439,416
0.82%	Computer Information Services	\$256,883
0.35%	Convention Session & Committees	\$110,425
8.19%	SUBTOTAL	\$2,565,661

State Benevolent Institutions

3.02%	Church Annuity	\$945,684
1.75%	Baptist Children's Village	\$549,218
1.33%	MS Baptist Foundation	\$416,311
1.05%	Christian Action Commission	\$328,259
0.20%	Historical Commission	\$61,108
7.35%	SUBTOTAL	\$2,300,580



GRAND TOTAL
\$31,314,491

The Cooperative Program and the Kingdom of God

If you are a Southern Baptist what do you need to know about the Cooperative Program? Is it merely a way to support the denomination, or is it a relevant, viable process that makes a difference in people's lives beginning where you live and extending around the world?

The Cooperative Program has the potential, when rightly employed, for moving Southern Baptist missions and ministries from the ordinary, the average, the good — to superlative, outstanding, great fruitfulness for the kingdom of God.

YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE GREAT NEED

In Matthew 9:35-38, Jesus emphasizes to his disciples the great need of humanity. He was in the midst of ministry and began to be overwhelmed by the vast "lostness" of humanity. He was moved with compassion because they were "harassed and helpless." He said, "The harvest truly is plentiful" (NKJV). In a companion passage in John 4, the same idea is used when Jesus says to his disciples, "The harvest is ripe." It is ready. Don't say in four months. Don't say next year. Don't say in another decade. Don't say when things get better. Right now the harvest is ready. Lost people are everywhere. They are hurting. They are ready.

In the 21st century, the words that Jesus spoke 2,000 years ago have never been truer than they are today. When the new millennium began, the earth had reached a population of six billion people. Statisticians say half of the people who have ever lived in human history are alive today. The continuous news stories from CNN or FOX News take the viewer to people and events around the globe in real time. The lives and struggles of the earth's inhabitants are not abstract ideas but concrete, visible realities. Modern Christians in the West have no delusions about the fact of the world's pain. It is as Jesus saw it. People are hurting, and they are ready for the Gospel. The harvest truly is plentiful.

You need to know that there great need to advance the kingdom of God. The Cooperative Program is not merely "fund-raising" for denominational programs. It is a lifeline for the most important enterprise in the world. It makes a difference.

YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE GREAT STRATEGY

Jesus said, "The laborers are few." Even as he prayed for more laborers, he envisioned a plan for carrying out his mission. In Acts 1:8, as Jesus was approaching his

NO ONE PUTS MISSIONS AND MINISTRIES TOGETHER LIKE THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

CARING PEOPLE—TOGETHER TOUCHING THE WORLD
www.sbc.net/cp

ascension to heaven, he gave the church a battle strategy. The church would move out in concentric circles starting in Jerusalem and then into Judea and Samaria and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. Jesus saw his church as an ever-moving, ever-expanding, relentless, marching army of evangelists intending to reach the ends of the earth. That is how he envisioned his kingdom's work.

The Cooperative Program embodies this same strategy. While Baptists are ministering in their local "Jerusalems," the Cooperative Program allows them to engage the rest of the world, outside Jerusalem, and into Judea and into Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth. It is the local church's vehicle for implementing the Great Commission. We have identified four characteristics (the four Cs) that make the Cooperative Program a thoroughly biblical, unusually efficient, and superbly effective plan for reaching the world with the Gospel.

The Cooperative Program is coherent rather than chaotic. There is a plan. The Cooperative Program is intentional and purposeful. It utilizes a thoughtful,

prayerful strategy. Have you ever watched five-year-olds play soccer? The action in these games often consists of one player for each team sitting in opposite goals while the other twenty players from both teams move in a little mass of arms and legs wherever the ball is. It isn't very artful or effective although it is usually quite energetic and cute. As the children grow older, they are taught a more successful strategy for playing soccer, which covers the whole field and involves a thoughtful plan for actually getting the ball in the goal.

Some mission endeavors, while enthusiastic and well-intended, do not have a coherent plan for accomplishing their aims. They may not lack for enthusiasm, but they are not given to strategic planning or reliable reporting. The Cooperative Program undergirds a thoughtful, coherent, intentional strategy for systematically reaching the goal.

Southern Baptists can be thankful to God for the Cooperative Program because it is a constant stream of support. Year in, year out, the missionaries are supported

Get It Together

Pastor and Sunday School Director Conference



Monday, May 1
Bethlehem BC
Laurel

Tuesday, May 2
Calvary BC
Greenwood

This will be a great time of fellowship together as the pastor and Sunday School director of your church meet together to recapture the vision for your Sunday School. Participants will experience:

- The purpose of Sunday School – a 1st Century concept in a 21st Century world
- The job description of the pastor, as it pertains to Sunday School
- The job description of the Sunday School director
- How to avoid being the Lone Ranger
- How to plan and dream together

Dinner: 6:30 p.m.
Conference
7-8:30 p.m.

A complimentary dinner will be provided for all preregistered participants. To preregister, contact the Sunday School Department, 601-292-3291 or 1-800-748-1651.

OLDER CHILDREN'S BIBLE DRILL CAMP '06

For Church Groups of Boys and Girls Grades 3 – 6 (completed)

July 6 – 8 Central Hills Baptist Retreat

Any Mississippi Baptist church can bring their children and they will profit from camp whether they have ever done Bible Drill or not.

Each church group must have a male counselor (21 or older) for every 7 boys (or portion thereof) and a female counselor (21 or older) for every 7 girls (or portion thereof). Church counselors are with their children during all camp activities.

CAMP ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

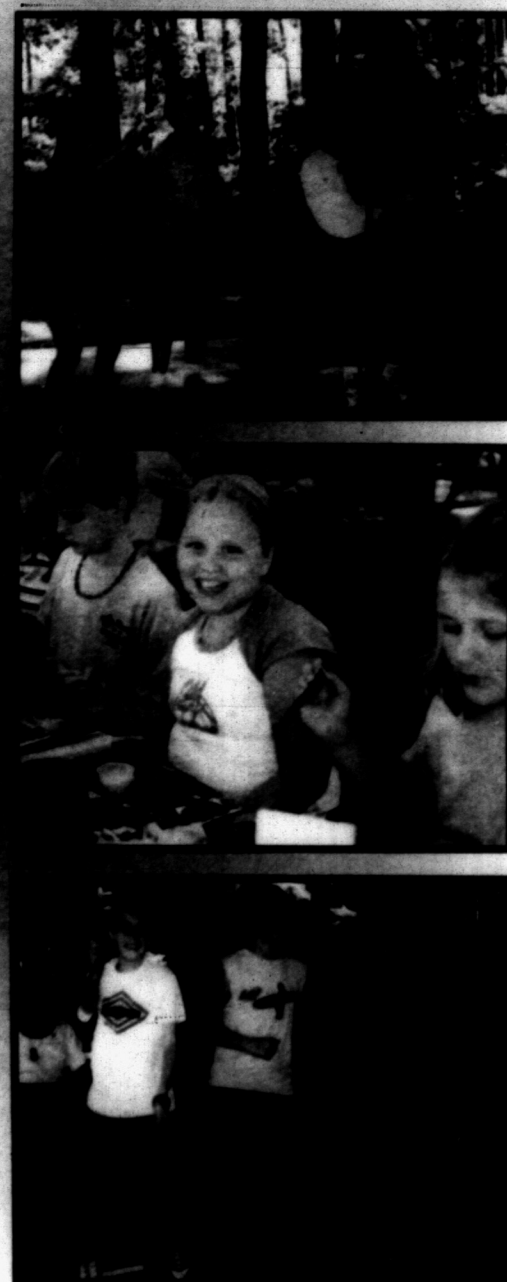
- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Bible Study | • Scripture Memorization | • Rifle Range |
| • Bible Drill Skills | • Worship | (safety & marksmanship) |
| • Time with Missionaries | • Flag Ceremonies | • Horseback Riding |
| • Swimming | • Canoeing | |

\$45 Deposit with Registration, Total Cost \$90

Check-in at camp is at 2 p.m., Thursday, July 6, 2006

For questions about camp program: contact Discipleship & Family Ministry
at 1-800-748-1651 or dhicks@mbcb.org.

Camp Bible Skills & Studies based
on Children's Bible Drills
BLUE CYCLE for
2006-2007



Pray this day for...

April 21 - May 4, 2006

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

"If a church wants a better pastor, it only needs to pray for the one it has."

"TE BOZ" teboz@juno.com

For: (1) Life Commitment Sunday (P/LD Emphasis); (2) David Holmes, Lexington Tenn., is the youth and music minister, FBC, Lexington, and a volunteer chaplain for the Lexington Police Department. Pray for protection from violence for inner city students attracted to gangs, and that they will come to know Christ.

Muslim evangelists are active in a western province in Rwanda, recently opening two mosques where few Muslims have lived before. Pray for the new believers in Christ here as they plan a day of prayer and fasting. Intercede for these believers as they prepare to visit and share their faith with the new converts to Islam.

For: (1) Preaching and Worship Conference, FBC, Vicksburg (P/LD); (2) Remember new believers among the Go-Land of the Pacific Rim. Lift up Mr. E, the family of Mr. SL, who has been reached recently; Mrs. F, whose friends urge her to give up following our Lord and Savior; and Mr. SB, who continues to go to a local shaman for healing.

For: (1) Pastor/Sunday School Director Conference, Bethlehem BC, Laurel (SS); (2) Roger and Rose Bear, Terre Haute, Ind., co-minister with students from Indiana State University and three area colleges. Pray for the spirit of God to be evident in the Christian students, and for Kevin and Emily Brooks to reach international students.

For: (1) Preaching and Worship Conference, FBC, Starkville (P/LD); (2) Senior Adult Choir Festival Hillcrest BC, Byram, 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (CM); (3) Please pray today for President of the General Council Joseph Ho-Ten-You of French Guiana (northeastern South America).

For: (1) Pastor/Sunday School Director Conference, Calvary BC, Greenwood (SS); (2) The Northwest Mexico City Team writes: "Thank you for your prayers for a new church plant on March 26th from our house church, Obra Nueva. Please continue to pray that we will start more house churches so Mexico City will know Christ."

Discipleship of new believers is vital to seeing a church-planting movement become a reality in Khark oblast (region) of Ukraine. Pray that pastors and church leaders would "catch the vision" for empowering believers to mentor and disciple others. Ask the Lord to give believers a passion to know Him and share His love with others.

For: (1) Baptist Building Staff AT HOME DAYS, 3rd - 5th; (2) During the recent African Cup football tournament, believers interacted with soccer fans from many Muslim countries. A large number of Bibles were given away to these fans. Pray that each person who received a Bible will read it, be convicted and respond to salvation God offers.

Emory Lussi is a Navy chaplain serving with Marines in North Carolina. Pray for safety for the men in his battalion who left for Iraq, and for the ones returning home to make a good adjustment. Pray too for his slow, painful recovery from shoulder surgery.

Many believers in Turkey are the only believers in their family and even in their city/village. A lady facing daily verbal abuse at work due to her faith had to quit her job. She doesn't have permission to attend church, but a believer can visit her. Thank God that she is allowed to read the Bible in her room. Pray for others in similar situations.

For: (1) Missionary Parent Fellowship, Camp Garaywa, Clinton, 21st - 22nd (WMU); (2) State Handbell Festival, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, Kosciusko, 21st - 22nd (CM); (3) Please pray today for President Oscar Temaru of the Territorial Government of French Polynesia (South Pacific Ocean).

For: (1) Annual Missions Celebration/Associational Leader Training, Broadmoor BC, Madison, 28th - 29th (WMU); (2) State Handbell Festival, Wynndale BC, Terry, 28th - 29th (CM); (3) For Jim Kuttau, pastor of Fernwood BC in Gulfport, for their many seniors, and for the recovery and rebuilding on the Gulf Coast due to Katrina.

For: (1) Mississippi Missionary Fellowship, Camp Garaywa, Clinton, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (WMU); (2) Please pray for International Service Corps worker Ryan Bush, REAP South Team, as he travels with a volunteer from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary while doing research in the area of Apurimac, Peru.

The only two believers in a previously resistant ethnic minority group in China decided it was up to them to share the Gospel in their group. In six months they led 111 people to Christ and started 11 churches. Pray that increasing numbers of Chinese believers will accept the challenge to lead people to Christ and start churches.

Discover the Joy of Missions Conference/Weekender

Bus Trip A

September 26 - October 1, 2006

Includes program fee, conference meals, conference lodging (double occupancy), and transportation

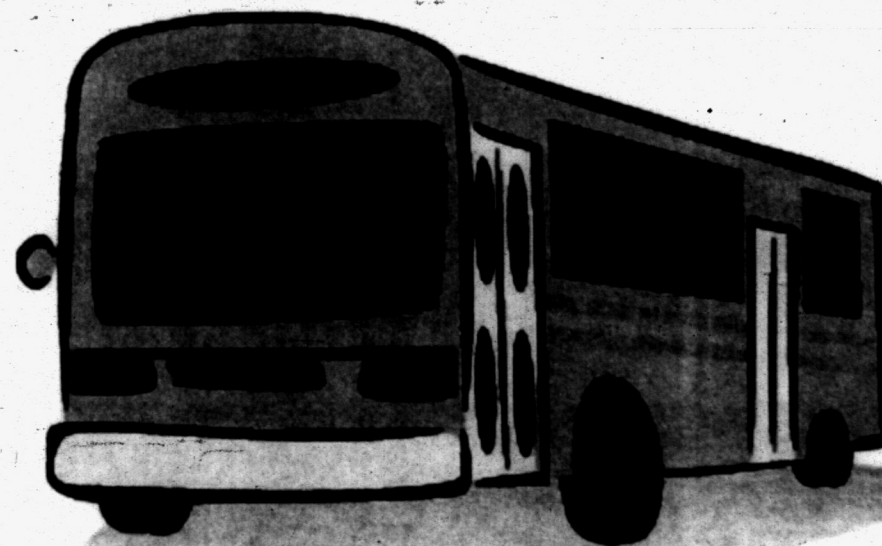
\$600

Bus Trip B

September 28 - October 1, 2006

Includes program fee, conference meals, conference lodging (double occupancy), one night travel lodging (double occupancy), and transportation

\$450



Mississippi wMu is sponsoring two bus trips to the *Discover the Joy of Missions Conference and Missions Weekender* at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center. "Bus Trip A" will be attending both the training conference and missions weekender. "Bus Trip B" will only attend the missions weekender. The cost and registration for each trip are listed. We will travel on 29 passenger buses provided by Cline Tours.

For more information contact the state wMu office: 1-800-748-1651 or check out our Website: www.mbcab.org

Deadline to register: July 28

HOUSE TOPS



Practical Principles for Christian Living

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION • VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 4



2006 Legislative Analysis



Jimmy Porter

The 2006 Legislative Session is now history. The Christian Action Commission (CAC) spends a lot of time at the Capitol during the session especially if there are bills that relate to our areas of concern. Decisions were made that have and will continue to affect our lives.

As I write this brief analysis of this year's session, allow me to remind you that the Baptist Record is not the "Democratic Daily" nor is it the "Republican Rag." Also, the CAC is not an advocacy group for Republicans or Democrats.

This year the bills ranged from forbidding "hog dog rodeos" to adding \$113 million to K-12 public education. The rodeos were commercial events that pitted a dog against a hog (with tusks removed) in an enclosed pen, a barbaric activity that needed to be stopped.

At the end of the session there was a \$221 million dollar surplus which enabled our legislators to give state employees a minimum \$1,500 increase along with providing additional relief to Katrina stricken areas. In addition to the added funding for K-12, Senate Bill 2604 authorized a four year plan for fully funding the Mississippi Adequate Education Program.

Our senators and representatives are to be commended for giving us a balanced budget and for the outstanding work they did on numerous other bills. But we did lose a few opportunities to pass some significant legislation.

The bill to ban cloning in Mississippi died in a senate committee. This cloning bill included the banning of embryonic stem cell research and somatic cell nuclear transfer. Both the House and the Senate conducted public hearings where pro and con arguments were made. These hearings were emotionally charged, and it was there the bill lost its support. The proponents of embryonic stem cell research along with a few in the media falsely accuse the CAC, Pro-

Life Mississippi and other such groups as being against stem cell research. We have and will continue our support of stem cell research but must draw the line when embryos are created and destroyed for research purposes.

The ban abortion bill also died in conference. This bill originated in the House of Representatives and looked good on the surface. After further review the bill contained some unacceptable issues. The informed consent law and the 24 hour waiting period which are strong pro-life bills would have been jeopardized. Therefore, Senator Alan Nunnelee and his conferees were right in allowing it to die in conference.

Most of you watched with interest as two bills aimed at lowering grocery taxes and increasing cigarette taxes were passed by the House and Senate only to be vetoed by the governor. The second of these bills seemed workable and reasonable but attempts to overturn the veto failed. Mississippi has one of the highest grocery taxes in the nation and one of the lowest cigarette taxes. I read our gover-

nor's explanation of why he chose to veto them, but I did not find them convincing. These two vetoes along with another veto of a bill to put the Partnership for A Healthy Mississippi under the direction of the legislature makes me believe our governor has not strayed far from his days as a tobacco lobbyist.

The grocery tax bill will probably be addressed again next year in some form. It will be interesting to see how our senators and representatives will vote in an election year especially if they intend to run for state-wide office. It might prove rather difficult to explain to Mississippians why one voted to keep our grocery tax one of the highest in the land.

All in all, our senators and representatives do an admirable yet difficult job in taking tax dollars and stretching them as far as they do. So when you see them, thank them and most of all, pray for them.

Porter is a executive-director/treasurer for the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at jporter@christianaction.com.

COLLEGE NEWS



Sekanic places in Bi-State Art Competition, MC

Carey Dinner Theatre at William Carey College in Hattiesburg has announced the productions for its 31st season. Opening the 2006 season is *Clue, The Musical*. It will be presented nightly except Sundays and Mondays, June 15 through July 1. *Schoolhouse Rock Live!* will be presented July 11 through July 22. Dinner is

served at 7 p.m. in the O. L. Quave Theatre on the Hattiesburg campus, and the performance follows. Beginning June 5, the box office will be open from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and seats maybe reserved by calling (601)318-6221. The admission price of \$25 includes the buffet meal and show.

William Carey College will dedicate a new baseball field and alumni house to Milton and Donna Wheeler at ceremonies to be held April 28 and 29 on the Hattiesburg campus. Friday's events leading to Saturday's official dedication ceremonies include a Golf Scramble to benefit Carey's baseball program beginning at 1 p.m. at Shadow Ridge Golf Club in Hattiesburg. Prizes will be awarded for gross score and net score. On Saturday the Donna Wheeler Alumni House will be dedicated at 10 a.m. Dedication of the Milton Wheeler Field will begin at 1:15 p.m. on the newly constructed field. Call D.J. Pulley, sports information director and coordinator of the golf scramble, at (601)318-6111 or (800)962-5991 ext. 111 for more information and reservations. The public is invited to the two dedication ceremonies on April 29.

Mississippi College Department of Art is proud to announce that MFA student Chelsea Sekanic won a Purchase Award in the Meridian Museum of Art Bi-State Art Competition. Sekanic's oil painting entitled, *Regret*, was purchased by the museum for its permanent collection. As winner of the competition's Purchase Award, she received \$500. Sekanic, of Madison, is a Master of Fine Arts candidate graduating in May.

REVIVALS & HOMECOMINGS

Airport Church, Grenada: Homecoming, May 7; worship, 11 a.m.; afternoon singing; Bobby McKay, speaker; Steve McGregor, "Sounds for Christ," music.

Lawn Haven Church, Laurel: 50th anniversary/ homecoming and Revival, May 7-10; Sunday, morning service and dinner on the grounds; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Will Baker, homecoming speaker; former pastors, revival services; David MacIsaac, pastor.

Goodwater Church, Lauderdale County: Homecoming, May 7; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; Taylor Wallace, speaker.

Harmony Church, Carroll County: Homecoming, Apr. 30; worship, 10:30 a.m. and cemetery association meeting, followed by

dinner on the grounds; Leon Holly, speaker. The church is also holding worship services the first Sunday of each month with Billy R. Philley, Jr., Southaven, speaker.

Smyrna Church, Hazlehurst: Homecoming, May 7; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; Servant's Heart, music; Millard Mackey, pastor.

Park Haven Church, Laurel: Revival, Apr. 30 - May 5; Sun., worship, 10:35 a.m., followed by dinner and singing, 2 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Jerry Stroo, Ovett, speaker; Jimmy Downs, music.

Gum Grove Church, Lincoln County: Homecoming, Apr. 23; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch and special music; Clarence Young, Brandon, speaker; Philip Caples, pastor.

Visit us online at www.mbcch.org

STATE CHANGES

Belden Church, Belden, has called Jim Holcomb as senior pastor. He previously served as pastor of First Church, Iuka.

Bibliocipher

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EPY ST FLS XLJ HAPS AP
BX YPFUYPO, B LF YPFUY-
PO TQ RTO: QTW RTO
NLSTY MP YPFUYPO
HBYA PGBE, SPBYAPW
YPFUPYA AP LSJ FLS.

CLFPX TSP:YABWYPPS

Clue: Y = T

Have fun with cryptography, and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Hebrews Twelve: Twenty-Eight.



1. Deacon Ordination, Hebron Church, Grenada

1. **Hebron Church, Grenada**, ordained three new deacons Apr. 2. Shown are Bobby Hollis, Tommy Hipp, Larry Ralston, and pastor Harold W. Simmons.

iation. Shown are Pickens and pastor Sean Tutor. Pickens can be reached for youth activities, events, and possible youth ministry positions at (662) 767-8213.

2. The State Youth Keyboard Festival was held Feb. 25 at **Woodland Hills Church, Jackson**. Ten students in grades 10 - 12 were able to participate and five were awarded a \$25 summer scholarship payable to a Baptist sponsored event of their choice.

6. The last service of **McDowell Road Church, Jackson**, will be Apr. 30, 2 p.m. The church facility has been purchased by Metro East Church of Christ. All former members, staff members, and friends are invited to attend. For information, call (601) 372-1594.

3. **First Church, Gluckstadt**, recently completed their new building. Shown before the newly installed stained glass window are pastor Author Comans and Josh Dear, associate pastor.

7. **Carrollton Church, Carrollton**, will host Promised Quartet in concert Apr. 30, 6 p.m. A love offering will be taken.

4. **Fellowship Church, Starkville**, honored former pastor Cornell Daughtry with a plaque for more than five years of love and dedication to the congregation. Shown are pastor Dustin Stockstill and Daughtry.

8. **Moselle Memorial Church, Moselle**, will host The Meyers Family at a gospel sing/worship service Apr. 30, 6 p.m. A love offering will be taken.

5. Lance Pickens surrendered to the youth ministry at **Brewer Church, Lee Assoc-**

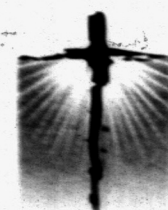
9. **Center Terrace Church, Canton**, will host a gospel singing featuring By His Grace Quartet with Mike and Alison Smitherman Apr. 30, 6 p.m. A love offering will be taken.



2. State Youth Keyboard Festival, Woodland Hills Church, Jackson



3. Comans and Dear in new building, First Church, Gluckstadt



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS



4. Daughtry Honored, Fellowship Church, Starkville

10. The youth of **Cairo Church, Pontotoc Association**, participated in a True Love Waits weekend. Keith and Nancy Nance and Michelle Works and youth leader Kathy Simmons conducted the classes.



5. Pickens and Tutor, Brewer Church, Lee Association

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Scholarship Ministry

The apostle Paul expressed confidence in his Lord when he declared, "And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). This well-known verse highlights the focus of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation's Scholarship Ministry.

Due to the generosity of many faithful Christian stewards, the Foundation has the privilege of providing needs-based supplemental financial assistance to Mississippi students who are pursuing a degree at a Mississippi Baptist college or a Southern Baptist seminary. Most of these endowed scholarship accounts offer specific eligibility guidelines for awarding a scholarship grant. Factors such as field of study, institution attended, and scholarship amount often are included as stipulated criteria for award consideration.

For more information about the Mississippi Baptist Foundation Scholarship Ministry, please contact our office at Post Office Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205, telephone us at (601) 292-3210, or (800) 748-1651, or visit our website, www.mbcf.org/agencies/mbf. A completed application must be received in the MBF office by April 30.



THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

You Have a Mission

Acts 1:1-14

By Huey Dedmon

The older I get the more I realize how important it is to have a mission and purpose in life. It is my experience that people are more satisfied, happy, and fulfilled when they are busy. This is especially true when we are busy reaching beyond ourselves and helping other people. As a minister I am given the opportunity to see many types of people in many kinds of situations. Those who respond to difficult situations the best are those who have a good handle on why they are here and what good they can do in life. Everyone who has given their life to Christ has a God given mission and purpose.

Our lesson this week moves to the book of Acts. Jesus has died on the cross, been resurrect-

ed from the grave, and has appeared 40 days bodily to the disciples. He had spent much of those 40 days teaching them more about the kingdom of God. He also stressed the important role they would have in continuing His mission to seek and save the lost. Just before Jesus ascends into heaven He commands the disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait for "the fathers promise." (Acts 1:4, HCSB) The disciples still had questions (v. 6), but Jesus assured them that God had a plan and that plan would be worked out in God's time. (v. 7) Next, Jesus set the stage for their mission and our mission. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and



Dedmon

Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (v. 8, HCSB) People often ask where we get the authority to go into our communities and knock on the doors of strangers, neighbors, and friends. According to this verse our authority comes from Jesus. He has commissioned us to be on mission for Him and He has given us the power to accomplish that mission.

Just like the disciples, you and I need to know all we can about the kingdom of God and the teachings of Jesus. Individual Bible study and corporate Bible study are key ingredients in our preparation to be on mission for Christ. A great portion of our churches resources are spent on our Bible study programs. But we must also make it a priority not to just come to church and learn all we can, but we must take what we learn and go and tell somebody about the Jesus we have come to know personally. There are

numerous ways we can spread the good news. Jesus gives us a strategy in verse eight to accomplish this enormous task. We start where we are, in our Jerusalem. Work in your local food kitchen, participate in your churches outreach ministry, work in a local youth sports camp, or wash cars for free use the opportunity to tell someone about Jesus. The possibilities for local good news ministries are endless. Jesus then tells us to go into Judea and Samaria. These represent our state and nation. If you are serious about your mission, join a group going to the coast to help Katrina victims, or spend a week building a church in Montana. Jesus also calls us to go to the ends of the earth. The International Mission Board is in constant need of volunteers to work short term, and long term mission projects. We are without excuse! The opportunities are all around us. All believers have the mission to be witnesses for Jesus not only where they live but throughout the world.

After Jesus had been taken

from them, the disciples followed His instructions; and returned to Jerusalem. (v. 12-14) There are two things that are significant in this passage. The disciples obeyed Jesus by returning to Jerusalem, and they "were continually united in prayer." (v. 14) Obedience and prayer are key ingredients to receiving and using the power of the Holy Spirit. Obedience starts us on the journey and prayer guides us down the right paths. Often we are like the disciples in verse 10, standing around, waiting for something to happen. "While He (Jesus) was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. They said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen Him going into heaven." The time for waiting has passed. Jesus will return soon. We have been given a mission. Let's get to it!

Dedmon is minister of education at First Church, Grenada.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Take Comfort in God's Strength

Isaiah 40:1-8, 10-11, 27-31

By Lori Clendinning

What is it about those "Andy Griffith Show" reruns that cause us to watch them over and over again? There is some sort of universal appeal about dropping down into a wicker chair on Andy's front porch, joining in the hymn singing with Barney and Gomer, having satisfied our appetites at Aunt Bea's table. Don't we all long for that kind of slow and easy pace, especially when we are living our actual lives in a fast forward culture?

The stress of the American way of life takes its toll on all of us, so let's especially focus on this week's lesson and take it to heart: God cares about and offers His strength to us when we feel overwhelmed by life. Many of us experience stress from many sources. We feel we are being pulled simultaneous-

ly in various directions, with multiple responsibilities at home, at work, and at church. Believing that we are unable to give our best in any of these situations may further increase stress levels. God invites all of us who are wearied by life's demanding circumstances to experience comfort and find strength in fellowship with Him.

There are four actions we can take to make this truth more evident in our lives, all found in Isaiah 40: Encourage one another (1-5); acknowledge weakness (6-8); rely on God's protection (10-11); and depend on God's strength (27-31).

The first 39 chapters of Isaiah emphasized God's judgment upon His wayward children, but the second half, found in chapters 40 through 66, focus upon God's consolation or comfort.



Clendinning

Theologian John R. Sampey referred to these chapters as "the heart of the Old Testament" because of the prophecies of comfort and encouragement that were offered.

Isaiah had spent his life under the threat of the Assyrian empire. North Israel was destroyed in 734 BC; the rest of the Northern Kingdom thirteen years later in 721 BC; seven years later they invaded Judah. By 701 BC the Assyrians had taken all of Judah except for Jerusalem, which Isaiah had predicted would stand despite her enemy's attempts to overtake her. Even though the great Assyrian crisis was behind her, Isaiah now prophesied that Jerusalem would fall to Babylon.

Despite their gloomy future, God commanded His people to encourage and comfort one another with the knowledge that He was at work demonstrating His forgiveness. Likewise, we can encourage one another because God con-

tinues to work redemptively in His children's lives today. Disaster may be looming from the consequences of sin's work in our lives, but God always grants comfort for those who turn to Him.

As frail human beings, we pale in comparison to God whose power and strength are eternal. By acknowledging our utter weakness, we can hold onto God's eternal truth where we find comfort in God's strength. Remember these tender words from the beloved hymn: "I am weak, but Thou art strong. Jesus, keep me from all wrong. I'll be satisfied as long, as I walk, let me walk, close to Thee." Let that be our daily prayer, an admission of our imperfections and our needful cry for God's redemption.

In Isaiah 40:10 the "Sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules." The word "power" is literally "arm" and it is noteworthy that the arm raised in victory is also lowered in compassionate protection and nurture, just as a shepherd gathers lambs and keeps them close to his heart (v.

11). Even though God does not always prevent His people from experiencing life's perils, we are eternally secure in our relationship with Him and receive from Him what we need most. God guards and gives to those who depend on His strength. We can rely on the Lord's protection and provision as we take comfort in His strength.

The everlasting God strengthens those who are willing to depend on His strength. It is imperative that we depend on God's strength in order to find comfort. Only by running into the tower that is our God will be sheltered. In God alone is there comfort for anyone who is overcome by the stresses of life.

Climb up onto God's porch and set awhile, all ye who are heavy laden. He will give you the refreshment you need, for those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. You will run and not grow weary, you will walk and not be faint (v.31).

As Andy would say, "Mmmm, good!"

Clendinning is a member of First Church, Brandon.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Baptist Record

N.C. church goes all out for CP

GREENVILLE, S.C. (BP) — Everything Mountain Creek Church does is connected in some way with the Cooperative Program. "The Cooperative Program is what being a New Testament church is all about," said David Shirley, pastor of the Greenville, S.C., congregation. "Acts 2 talks about helping those in need. The better you work together, the more people you can help ...

"We want to do our part, but the Cooperative Program doesn't start with us and it doesn't end with us," Shirley noted. "We're just a part of it, a part of the way God is using Southern Baptists to reach out and touch people around the world."

Mountain Creek gives 11% of its members' undesignated offerings to missions through the Cooperative Program and another four percent to local missions through the North Greenville Association.

Church members also go on several mission trips each year. In May they're set to go to Hungary and in June to Thailand. Also in June and again in July, they'll be going back to New Orleans for the fourth and fifth times to help Iglesia Bautista Getsemini, the church they adopted in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Mountain Creek also reaches out to its community in western South Carolina with seasonal events such as a block party in April that will include, among other attractions, NASCAR vehicles and the chance to change a tire at race speed. In addition to major events at Easter and Christmas, in the summers the church hosts community sports camps, kids camps, and Vacation Bible School, and in late October, a fall festival that has drawn nearly 600 people.

"We're excited about what God is doing in the life of our church," Shirley said. "We want to lift up the Lord Jesus Christ in everything we do."

Warehouse employee Wayne McJunkin said he felt his Christian life blossom when he started using his hands for the Lord.

"I wanted to be part of it [the church's second mission trip to New Orleans]," McJunkin said. "This is the Lord's work. We are His hands."

Auto parts salesman John Lawless, on his second trip to help Getsemini, agreed.

"I wasn't going to come but the closer it came time to, I just had to," said Lawless, who worked with electrical components at the Getsemini church, which Mountain Creek had first help gut

and now is rebuilding. "I had to help our brothers and sisters get their church together again."

Mountain Creek was among the first churches to sign up to adopt one of the New Orleans churches as part of its Cooperative Program focus, Shirley said. A team assessed the situation the week before Thanksgiving and a team was back a couple of weeks later to get started on what they realized was a Herculean task.

"We were absolutely amazed at the extent of the damage," Shirley said. "The first time, one of the drums was still hanging on top of one of the overhead speakers. There was nine feet of water [in the auditorium]."

During their second trip, Mountain Creek members took everything — furniture, books, carpet and more — from inside the church and put it on the street, sprayed the interior with mold-killing chemicals, pressure-washed the exterior bricks and began removing Sheetrock.

"Our first impression was to demolish everything," said Brad Kelley, Mountain Creek's associate pastor. "But this was their church, and we know how we feel about our church."

Mountain Creek also sent love offerings to ravaged Getsemini church, and the women had a household shower for pastor's wife Romy Rivera. The pastor and his family lost everything in the flooding that followed Katrina.

About 350 people attend Sunday morning worship at Mountain Creek, which was founded 190 years ago. A slideshow of the church and its ministry to youth, children, families, senior adults and community can be seen on its website: www.mountaincreekbc.org.

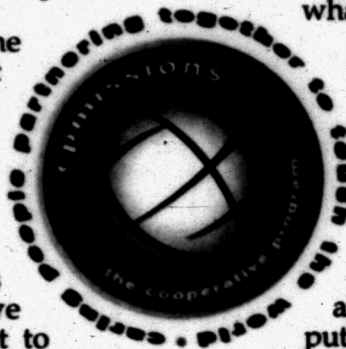
"Our vision theme is 'Looking up and reaching out,'" Shirley said. "Drawing near to God as we reach out to our fellow man."

The Cooperative Program is central to the vision, Shirley said.

"You can't give enough," he said. "The Cooperative Program supports missionaries around the world, helps seminary students continue their education, and it gives us an opportunity to reach around the world, literally."

Mountain Creek also has a house it reserves for the use of furloughing missionaries.

"Having them at the missionary house and being involved in our church when their schedules permit allows us to visually see the difference our Cooperative Program giving makes for the Kingdom of God," the pastor said.



First, Cleveland displays a CP heart

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

While many churches look for ways to trim their budgets, First Church, Cleveland, protects mission giving through the Cooperative Program (CP). The church gives 14% of its budget to CP.

According to pastor Bradley Rushing, "The church has been known for being an extraordinarily giving missions church. We set our CP giving as a percentage of the budget."

"The church holds mission giving as a number one, high priority. God has blessed our church, and we just want to pass those blessings along. The church members tithe to the Lord through the church, because the Lord loves a cheerful giver, but we believe that the Lord also loves a cheerful giving church so our church gives its tithes and offerings through the Cooperative Program. The Cooperative Program is a ministry, and it ministers to so many."

Rushing has been at the church a relatively short time, but the church continues to respond to his leadership in this area. "We recognize the effectiveness of the Cooperative Program in not only touching one individual missionary, but a multitude of missionaries. Not only does the money go to the benefit of Southern Baptists who are serving at home or abroad, but it goes to all sorts of other vital areas, such as the seminaries. There is such a multifaceted field of ministries that

God has led Southern Baptists as a whole to be involved in. It gives us the opportunity as a church to get in on what God is doing from a panoramic perspective rather than just a 'field' approach."

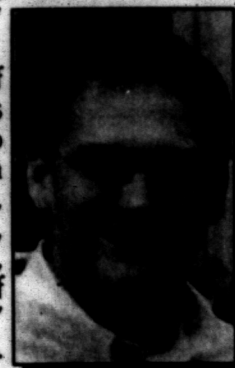
Part of the church's vision is to have a "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and ends of the earth" perspective.

"For instance,"

Rushing, "we want a group to address our Jerusalem, right here in Cleveland. We reach Cleveland with our in-house ministries. Now, all these areas are vitally important, and the Cooperative Program is a way to impact all of it, with an Acts 1:8 mission approach. It's a priority of this church which has been here years and years."

In Rushing's case, it wasn't a matter of getting people on board. "It's just a high priority for this church, since it has such a giving heart. People know that if they give, God has promised that their giving will make a difference."

"A cord of three strands cannot easily be broken," said Rushing. "It binds us together. It puts us on the same page — prayerfully, God's page. It gives us an opportunity to do what one church can't do by themselves. We all need to work together."



Rushing

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